

# The Martyrdom of Sayyidunā ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir

And the role of the Saba’iyyah

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## Transliteration key

أ- 'ā	ض - ḍ
آ - ā	ط - ṭ
ب - b	ظ - ḏ
ت - t	ع - 'a
ث - th	غ - gh
ج - j	ف - f
ح - ḥ	ق - q
خ - kh	ك - k
د - d	ل - l
ذ - dh	م - m
ر - r	ن - n
ز - z	و - w, ū
س - s	ه - h
ش - sh	ي - y, ī
ص - ṣ	

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# The Martyrdom of Sayyidunā ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir

## And the role of the Saba’iyyah

O ‘Ammār! My companions will not kill you. You will be murdered by a *Fi’at al-Bāghhiyyah* (group of rebels). (ḥadīth)

Sayyidunā ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was an illustrious Sahābī. He was amongst the first few to embrace Islam and is counted amongst the senior Muhājirīn. His entire household underwent great suffering for the cause of Islam. When Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would see their suffering, he would say:

صبرا آل ياسر موعدكم الجنة

Exercise patience, O family of Yāsir! Your abode will be Jannah.

First his father, Yāsir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, was martyred. Thereafter his mother, Sumayyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, was martyred at the hands of Abū Jahl, who thrust his spear in the most private parts of her body. They were from a poor family, and the other Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ were weak and few in number, therefore they too could not defend them.

Once the disbelievers cornered Sayyidunā ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and threatened to kill him if he does not renounce Islam. In order to save his life, he uttered these words, but immediately thereafter regretted and came before Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in tears: “Īmān is firmly embedded in my heart but I was forced to utter those words, what will happen to me?” These verses were then revealed:

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مِنْ أَكْرَهٍ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيمَانِ

He who becomes a disbeliever after having accepted īmān (will be severely punished) except for those who are compelled to do so and their hearts are content with īmān.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Sūrah al-Naḥl

## Virtues of Sayyidunā ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

1. Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ addressed him on the above occasion saying: “O ‘Ammār! Glad tidings for the likes of you, Allah has made matters easy for you.”
2. Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ loved ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ dearly. ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that ‘Ammār requested permission to meet Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, upon which Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: “Allow this ṭayyib muṭayyab (one who himself is pure and his deeds and actions are also pure) to enter”<sup>1</sup>
3. ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا narrates that Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: “‘Ammār chose the best of the two options placed before him.”<sup>2</sup>
4. A person from Iraq came to Sayyidunā Abū al-Dardā رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ in Syria to ask him a certain Islamic regulation, upon which he told him: “Is there not amongst you ibn Umm ‘Abd (‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ud) and ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir whom Allah has protected from shayṭān, according to the testimony given by Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ? And Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ who was the confidant of Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ?”<sup>3</sup>
5. During the construction of al-Masjid al-Nabawī, the Ṣaḥābah were carrying large rocks, one at a time. They jokingly gave ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ two to carry on which ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: “Your companions have killed me!” Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied: “O son of Sumayyah! My companions will not kill you rather you will be killed by a group of rebels.”<sup>4</sup>

This ḥadīth appears in the *Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah*, but certain narrators did not make mention

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1 Tirmidhī

2 ibid

3 Bukhārī

4 Wording from *Sīrah ibn Hishām* vol. pg. 497; also in *Al-‘iqd al-Farīd of ibn ‘Abd Rabbihī* (d. 328 A.H.), *Wafā’ al-Wafā’ of Samhūdī* (d. 911 A.H. vol. 1 pg. 235

of the construction of al-Masjid al-Nabawī and the phrase “my companions will not kill you”; they mentioned “he will invite them to Jannah and they will invite him to Jahannam.”

### Virtues of Sayyidunā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه

The virtues of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه are being mentioned since ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه had great love for him.

1. Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “Whoever is my close friend, ‘Alī will also be his close friend.”<sup>1</sup>
2. “O ‘Alī! You are of me and I am of you (an indication of the close relationship they had)”
3. ‘Alī رضي الله عنه says: “When I would ask then Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم would answer; and when I would be silent, then Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم himself would strike up a conversation.”
4. “May Allah have mercy upon ‘Alī, just as He has had mercy on Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān. O Allah! Let *ḥaqq* (truth) follow them wherever they move.”<sup>2</sup>
5. “O ‘Alī! You are my brother in this world and the next.”
6. “Allah has instructed me to love four Ṣaḥābah, and they in turn also love me: Abū Dhar, Miqdād, Salmān and ‘Alī”
7. Once Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم summoned ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn رضي الله عنهم and said: “These are from my household. O Allah! Whoever loves me, these two (children) and their parents, will be together with me in Jannah.”

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1 Tirmidhī

2 Tirmidhī 2/213

This is the reason why ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه stood alongside ‘Alī during the Battle of Šiffīn and was also martyred therein.

Many people claim that he was killed by Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه and his supporters, in a misconstrued sense of love for Sayyidunā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, whereas love for ‘Alī رضي الله عنه should be based upon his own inner perfections and virtues, regardless of whether he has enemies or not.

Such love which is dependent upon the concept of ‘the enemy of my enemy is my friend’ is the product of the followers of ‘Abd Allah ibn Saba’ and his followers, who in actual fact were his true enemies.

In light of the above narrations you might have also gauged the extent of misunderstanding that has arisen on account of the narrator not reporting the words in full, as well as not mentioning the circumstances in which the statement was made. The actual criminals responsible for this heinous crime escape scot-free, while the innocent have to bear the brunt of it.

### ‘Ammārs murderers are none other than the Saba’iyyah rebels

In this treatise, we wish to expose, in light of historic narrations, who the true murderers of ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, and ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه are. We will prove that this authentic ḥadīth (which states that ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه will be killed by a group of rebels) does not refer to any of the two groups of Šaḥābah who were present at Šiffīn, but rather to the Saba’iyyah rebels.

In Arabic, the word *Bāghhiyyah* (rebel) is the *ṣifat* (adjective) of the noun *Fi’at* (group). This noun along with its adjective become the *fā’il* (active participle, the one performing the action) of the verb “Killed”, and the *fā’il* has to be in existence before the action occurs. In other words, the doer of the action (i.e. the killer) will be a rebel group, who will already be established as rebels before the actual killing takes place. It does not mean that they will be declared to be rebels on account of them murdering ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه.



This group’s first act of rebellion took place against the Khalīfah ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, and the meaning of fi’at bāghīyyah, according to the dictionary, is explained as “The group which revolts against a just ruler.”<sup>1</sup>

The Saba’ites are the ones who murdered ‘Uthmān and thereby earned for themselves the title of “rebels”.

## Virtues of Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

### 1. Murrah ibn Ka’b narrates:

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was mentioning the trials which were soon to come, when a person wrapped in a sheet passed that way. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ then remarked: “At that time this person will be on the truth and upon guidance.” I jumped up and went to see who the person wrapped in the sheet was. It was ‘Uthmān. I approached Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, faced him directly, and asked: “Is it this one?” Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied: “Yes, it is him.” He also mentioned that the murderers will be rebels, astray and on falsehood.

### 2. Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: “Soon you will be faced with a trial and with differences.” One of the Ṣaḥābah asked: “Who will be our leader at that time or who do you command us to follow?” Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied: “Hold on to and obey your leader” gesturing towards ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ”<sup>2</sup>

If obedience to ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was necessary, then without a doubt his murderers and mischief mongers will be classified as insurgents and rebels.

### 3. Once Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ addressed ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ saying: “Allah will honour you with a mantle (of khilāfah). If the hypocrites desire that you remove that

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1 *Miṣbāḥ al-lughāt* pg. 67

2 *al-Bayḥaqi in Dalā’il al-Nubuwwah*- as reported in *Mishkāt* pg.563

mantle, do not remove it! Do not remove it!”

4. ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه narrated that Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “‘Uthmān will be martyred in a strife or trial which will take place. He will be the oppressed one.”<sup>1</sup>

From these narrations we clearly understand that the killers of ‘Uthmān were the true mischief mongers and oppressors, as well as hypocrites and rebels, since their intention was to remove the mantle of khilāfah from ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, which Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم instructed not to remove or hand over.

‘Alī رضي الله عنه also declared these people to be rebels and compared them to the disbelievers of *jāhiliyyah* (the pre-Islamic period of ignorance)

The following sermon of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه has been recorded in *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* (vol. 3 pg. 507), *Sīrat al-Khulafā’* of al-Khudrī (pg. 78) and other books as well:

After praising Allah, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه said: “After experiencing the misfortunes and wretchedness of jāhiliyyah, Allah has honoured us with the fortune of Islam. After the demise of Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, Allah kept the entire ummah united behind the three khulafā’. Today the situation we are facing has been brought upon the ummah by those who are seekers of the *dunyā* (world). These people look at the favours bestowed upon this ummah with jealousy, and they are bent on destroying and annihilating Islam. They wish to bring back the days of jāhiliyyah. Listen attentively! Tomorrow I am returning to Madīnah. Everyone is to join me, with the exception of those who had raised objections against ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه or anyone who had assisted in killing him. Such foolish ones should only curse themselves.”

When the followers of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’, such as ‘Albā’ ibn Ḥaytham, Sālim ibn Tha’labah ‘Absī, Ashtar Nakha’ī, etc., heard this announcement, they were convinced that if this reconciliation were to go ahead then it would result in

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1 *Tirmidhī*

them facing the death penalty. They therefore secretly instigated the fight that very night.<sup>1</sup>

### History also bears witness to the killers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه being the rebels

‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’ was a Jew from Yemen and the founder of the extremist Shī‘ī faction known as the Sabā’iyyah. His mother was of African origin. He had outwardly embraced Islam and then proceeded to travel to various regions of the Muslim world, with the sole purpose of inciting people to rebel against the Khalīfah, thus sowing the seed of mischief and strife amongst the Muslims. He began with Hījāz and then proceeded to Baṣrah and Kūfah. In the latter years of Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān’s رضي الله عنه khilāfah he went to Damascus, but was unable to influence the people there and was subsequently forced to leave. He then proceeded to Egypt where he established a small following, to whom he would present his deviated beliefs and ideas. He would say: “I am astonished at those Muslims who believe that Nabī ‘Isā عليه السلام will return to the earth prior to Qiyāmah, but they do not believe the same regarding Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, whereas the Qur’an states: “Indeed, He who has made the Qur’ān incumbent upon you will take you back to your place of return (i.e. Qiyāmah)” He would assert that Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم is more entitled to this honour than Nabī ‘Isa عليه السلام. A few from Egypt accepted this belief (known as Raj’ah)

‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’ fashioned this belief in such a way that people began debating and defending the belief of Raj’ah. He then went a step further and said: “Thousands of messengers came and they all had deputies whom they appointed and bequeathed should be followed, known as a waṣī. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم was the seal of the ambiyā’ and ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was *khātam al-awṣiyā’* (the seal of the deputies).

His devious beliefs did not end there but went on to proclaim: “Who is a greater oppressor than he who does not implement the bequest of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, but instead usurps the right of leadership given to ‘Alī by Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم”

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1 Ibn Khaldūn

himself, and takes control of the matters of the ummah himself?” He continued: “‘Uthmān has amassed a lot of wealth which he has taken possession of unlawfully, and here is ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, the waṣī of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم who has been deprived of his right as the khalīfah. It is your duty to rise up and ensure that he receives what is due to him. Begin with raising objections against your local leaders and governors. Outwardly adopt the stance of “Calling towards good and prohibiting evil”. Attract people’s attention to yourselves. Sow the seeds of revolution.”

‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’ then sent his agents to various other areas and he began corresponding with the mischief mongers in those places. Secretly he was inviting the people to join him, but outwardly it seemed like he was calling towards good. He attributed faults to the governors and wrote about it to his associates in other areas. These rumours spread to such an extent, that people would remark on hearing about it: “All praise be to Allah, we are better off than them. How difficult has things become for them due to their governors.” They might have drawn upon them the garb of piety but their true agenda was malevolent.<sup>1</sup>

In actual fact, these seeds of rebellion would later grow to become what is today known as Shī‘ism.

These efforts culminated into close on to two thousand five hundred rebels assembling and marching on Madīnah during the days of ḥajj, ultimately resulting in the martyrdom of Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه. The Ṣaḥābah of Madīnah wished to forcefully expel these insurgents but Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه prohibited them from spilling their blood. Sayyidunā Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه requested permission to dispatch an army from Syria for the protection of the Khalīfah, but again ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه said that there is no need for it; it will unnecessarily burden the people of Madīnah and the *bayt al-Māl* (public treasury).

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1 *Tārīkh ibn ‘Asākir* vol. 7 pg. 431, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* vol. 3 pg. 378,379, *ibn Khaldūn, Rijāl al-Kashī, Tanqīh al-Maqāl*

## ‘Ā’ishah, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr’s love for ‘Alī

Each of these rebels were from different backgrounds and entertained different ideas. Those from Egypt were mostly criminals and hoodlums, consisting of the likes of Kinānah ibn Bashīr, ‘Amr ibn Ḥumq, ‘Umayr ibn Ḍābī, Sowdān ibn Ḥamrān, Aswad Tuḡaybī, Khālīd ibn Muḷjim (the brother of ibn Muḷjim, the murderer of ‘Alī), etc. These were the murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه and they wished for ‘Alī رضي الله عنه to be appointed as the khalīfah. On the other hand, those from Baṣrah were more in favour of Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه to be the khalīfah, while those from Kūfah were in favour of Zubayr رضي الله عنه.

It should be noted that Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه were dear friends of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه from the very inception of Islam. They pledged their allegiance to Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه on the third day along with ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. During the consultation which appointed Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه as khalīfah, Sayyidunā Zubayr رضي الله عنه surrendered his right to khilāfah to Sayyidunā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.

After ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه had been martyred, Aḥnaf ibn Qays asked the entire congregation in al-Masjid al-Nabawī who allegiance should be pledged to, and it was Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه who replied that it should be ‘Alī.<sup>1</sup> When a few rebels and others wished to pledge their allegiance to them (Ṭalḥah and Zubayr), they instructed them to return home, saying: “We will pledge allegiance to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.”

‘Abd Allāh ibn Budayl ibn Warqā’ al-Khuzā’ī asked Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها who he should pledge allegiance to since ‘Uthmān has been martyred and she replied:

الزم عليا

Stick closely to ‘Alī!<sup>2</sup>

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1 *Fath al-Bārī* vol. 13 pg. 34

2 *Fath al-Bārī* vol. 13 pg. 57

You might have gauged the extent of love these great personalities (‘Ā’ishah, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنهم) had for ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, as is apparent from these narrations. They regarded him as the leader and the rightful khalīfah after ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه. Their lips were moist with the praises of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.

How inaccurate is it to now paint a picture of opposition and ill will existing between these three illustrious personalities and ‘Alī رضي الله عنه; this is but one of the worst alterations and distortions of historical facts. This picture was painted by the rebels who had murdered ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, since it was these three great personalities who were persistent that *qiṣāṣ* (death penalty) be carried out against the murderers immediately. *Qiṣāṣ* refers to the death penalty for a murderer, the incumbency of which is described in the Qur’ān:

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلِ.....

*Qiṣāṣ* is has been made incumbent upon you in the case of murder

These three noble personalities were of the opinion that *qiṣāṣ* be taken immediately and in so doing the murderers will be brought to justice. However, the state was not in a position to do so. The rebels had taken control of Madīnah and matters were in their hands. They would not ready to submit even to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, but were bent on forcing him to accede to their demands. ‘Alī رضي الله عنه even presented to his close friends, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr, his excuse for not being able to carry out the *qiṣāṣ* in the following manner:

O my brothers! I am also aware of that which you desire me to carry out, but I do not have the power and ability to do it now. Those who have mobilised these rebels have the upper hand. At the moment they are controlling us and we have no say over them.<sup>1</sup>

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1 *Nahj al-Balāghah* pg. 456 translated by Ja’far Ḥusayn, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* vol. 3 pg. 458

Dāwūd ibn Abū Hind narrates from Imām Sha‘bī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ:

After ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was martyred, they approached ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ who was sitting in the market place, requesting to put forward his hand so that they can pledge allegiance to him. ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ replied:

فقال حتى يتشاور الناس فقال بعضهم لئن رجع الناس إلى مسارهم بقتل عثمان ولم يتم بعده قائم لم يؤمن الاختلاف وفساد الأمة فأخذ الأشر فبايعوه

“Wait until I discuss the issue with the people.” Some people then remarked: “If people return to their areas after ‘Uthmān has been killed, and there is no leader of the Muslims in place, then there is great fear of disunity and strife breaking out.”

Ashtar then took hold of the hand of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and all the rebels pledged allegiance to him.<sup>1</sup>

What do you understand from this narration? ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ wished to consult with the Muhājirīn and Anṣār of Madīnah, but the rebels insist on taking the lead and in doing so they would ensure the safety of their own lives first and then maintain their authority over the people of Madīnah by becoming the advisors, ministers and commanders of the Khalīfah. What far thinking! What a deep plot! In short, they thought that by them appointing the khalīfah, the people of Madīnah will not have the courage to appoint anyone else who will save the ummah from this dissension and strife as a khalīfah. It will be us, i.e. the rebels, who will be in control of their affairs and we will have the final say in all matters.

### The Saba’iyyah rebelliousness and force

It is sad to say that history is replete with their evil deeds and plots which resulted in the blood of many Muslims being spilt. What was the extent of their influence and the force they commanded? Let us examine.

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1 *Fath al-Bārī* vol. 13 pg. 54, vol. 3 pg. 455

They issued a threat to the people of Madīnah, giving them two days in which they were to select a khalīfah. If they fail to do so then ‘Alī, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه will be executed. This is what prompted the people of Madīnah to take the pledge of allegiance on the hands of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.<sup>1</sup>

Moulānā Mu‘īn al-Dīn Nadwī writes in *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah* (vol. 2 pg. 91) while discussing the life of Sayyidunā Zubayr رضي الله عنه:

Even after ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was appointed the khalīfah, the situation in Madīnah did not return to normal and peace and safety was not established. The Saba’iyyah, who were the architects and masterminds of this revolution, were introducing new trials and turmoil at every step. The ignorant Bedouins, who were always on the lookout for such opportunities of strife and anarchy, also joined the Saba’iyyah. ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه desire was for these people return to their home towns and for the Bedouins to leave Madīnah, but due to the persistence and stubbornness of the Saba’iyyah, he was not able to do fulfil it.<sup>2</sup>

Thus arrived the crossroads, where each vehicle took a different path.

However, the Saba’iyyah did not allow each to traverse alternate paths, and instead were determined to ensure that these vehicles collide with each other. They placed the obstacles needed to achieve this aim. It was on account of these plots by the very same murderers of Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه that two major battles took place with Muslims on both sides. Here we are forced to mention the details from the books of history.

## The causes which led to and the outcome of the Battle of Jamal

The Battle of Jamal, and likewise the Battle of Ṣiffīn, were fought due to the planning and plotting of the rebels, and were based upon difference of opinion or

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1 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* vol. 3 pg. 456

2 with reference to *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* pg. 3081



ijtihād amongst the Ṣaḥābah and Tabi‘īn. However, the ummah has not recovered from the wounds caused by the sectarianism and disunity which resulted from it to this very day.

When ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was asked by his companion Qays ibn ‘Ubbād about what transpired, he replied: “I did not receive any instruction from Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم regarding it. It was based upon my own judgement and opinion.”<sup>1</sup>

‘Alī رضي الله عنه was of the opinion that everyone, including those who were demanding qīṣāṣ should first pledge allegiance to him, even though besides the rebels, the Muhājirīn and Anṣār in general along with Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه and Zubayr رضي الله عنه had already pledged allegiance to him. It was only Sayyidunā Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه and the people of Syria who had not yet pledged their allegiance. They insisted: “The rebels are part of your army, take the qīṣāṣ from them and then we will pledge allegiance, since you are most worthy and are the rightful khalīfah.” If the rebels were sincere followers of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and were truly well-wishers of Islam and the Muslims, they would have handed over the handful of people who murdered Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, so that qīṣāṣ could be taken. In doing so, everyone would have been pleased. This would have resulted in the Muslim army advancing just as it had during the era of the first three khulafā’, and the pages of history would have told a different story.

Some historians put the blame solely on the shoulders of Sayyidunā Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه. Why did he confront them? Why did he not just suffice by not allowing their army to enter Syria, just as he had previously, during the reign of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, expelled Ibn Saba’ from Syria? This was despite the Saba’iyyah threatening him.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, if Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه did not intervene then these rebels would have spread anarchy in the entire Muslim empire, as is understood from the

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1 Abū Dāwūd vol. 2 pg. 294

2 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī*

speech of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, when he urged the Muslims to take up arms against the Khawārij. He said:

You had the courage to march towards Mu‘awiyah and the people of Syria, yet you leave these rebels to roam freely. They will take possession of your children and property. These are the ones who unlawfully spilled blood, killed and plundered the people. Move in the name of Allah and attack them.<sup>1</sup>

These Khawārij comprised of the deprived from Egypt, Baṣrah, and Kūfah, as well as elsewhere. Hundreds of the Banū Umayyah clan, heirs and family members of ‘Uthmān fled to Syria because the rebels had taken control of Madīnah, and they feared being killed. Amongst them was ‘Ubayd Allah, the son of ‘Umar رضي الله عنه. He fled because of the rebels issuing special instructions for him to be the first to be killed. The reason being that twelve years prior to this, he killed Ḥurmuzān, an Iranian prince, for being instrumental in the killing of his father, ‘Umar رضي الله عنه. Ḥurmuzān was a dhimmī (non-Muslim living under Muslim rule). The blood money was paid by ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, according to the unanimous decision of the Muhājirīn and Anṣār.

Below is a list of those senior Ṣaḥābah, who did not pledge allegiance to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, and this too was not on account of some enmity or hatred towards ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, but only because the rebels were not leaving Madīnah and in their presence, did not want to be present in the court of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. They instead chose to remain in their homes. Furthermore, their lives were in danger which is why they chose to remain in their homes. These Ṣaḥābah were:

#### Muhājirīn

Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqās  
Sa’īd ibn Zayd  
‘Amr ibn Nufayl  
‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar

#### Anṣār

Ḥassān ibn Thābit  
Ka’b ibn Mālīk  
Maslamah ibn Makhḥal  
Abū Sa’īd

1 *Abū Dāwūd* vol. 2 pg. 309

Muḥammad ibn Maslamah	Nu‘mān ibn Bashīr
Abū Bakrah Nufay‘ ibn Ḥārith	Zayd ibn Thābit
Qudāmah ibn Math‘ūn	Rāfi‘ ibn Khadīj
Usāmah ibn Zayd	Fudhālāh ibn ‘Ubayd
Salamah ibn Salāmāh	Ka‘b ibn ‘Ujrah
Suhayb	

Jarīr from Madā‘inī, in *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* vol. 7 pg. 227

If only these senior Ṣaḥābah presented themselves in the court of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ or ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ himself had called upon them and included them in his counsel, the ummah would have been saved from a much strife and conflict.

### The Saba’iyyah are in actual fact munafiqīn

‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was in a complicated situation. He was not aware of what was going to transpire, neither was he aware of the hypocritical plots and schemes of the Saba’iyyah. As Allah Ta‘ālā told Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:

لا تعلمهم نحن نعلمهم

You do not know them (but) we know them.

Before continuing, let us examine the manner in which Allah Ta‘ālā describes the actions of the hypocrites in the noble Qur’ān:

- 1) وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨﴾ يُخَدِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۗ

Amongst the people are those who say: “We believe in Allah and the Last Day”, whereas they are not believers. They try to deceive Allah and the believers.”<sup>1</sup>

- 2) وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا ۗ وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شُيُطِينِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِءُونَ

1 Sūrah al-Baqarah: 8

And when they meet the mu’minīn they say: “We believe!” and when they are in private with their shayāṭīn, they say: “We are actually with you. We are only joking!”<sup>1</sup>

- 3) وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ

And from the people there are those whose speech is pleasing to you in this world (the likes of Akhnas ibn Sharīq and Ashtar al-Nakhaṭī) and they make Allah a witness to (the sincerity) in their hearts, whereas they are the worst of arguers (enemies)<sup>2</sup>

- 4) وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ ۗ وَإِنْ يَقُولُوا تَسْمَعُ لِقَوْلِهِمْ ۗ كَانَهُمْ خُشْبٌ مُّسَدَّدَةٌ ۗ يُحْسِبُونَ كُلَّ صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ فَاحْذَرْهُمْ ۗ قَتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّهُ يُؤَفِّكُونَ

And when the munafiqīn speak, you listen to their talks. They are as wooden pillars who regard every sound (of the discussions of the Muslims) to be against them. These are the enemies (of the Muslims) so be very wary of them. Allah will destroy them. How have they gone astray?<sup>3</sup>

- 5) عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ ۚ لِمَ آذَنْتَ لَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَّبِعَنَ لَكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمَ الْكٰذِبِينَ

May Allah forgive you! Why did you grant them permission? (If you did not grant them permission) then it would become apparent to you who are the truthful, and you would come to know the liars.<sup>4</sup>

According to our understanding, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنهما pledged allegiance to ‘Alī contentedly, with the intention of *I’lā’ Kalimat Allāh* (raising the word of Allah). During the next five months that ensued, from the 20 Dhū al-Ḥijjah up until the end of Jamād al-ūlā, they tried their utmost to convince the rebels to

1 Sūrah al-Baqarah: 14

2 Sūrah al-Baqarah: 204

3 Sūrah al-Munāfiqūn: 4

4 Sūrah al-Taubah: 43

return to their hometowns, so as to ease the process of executing the laws of qīṣāṣ and bring the murderers to justice. They even requested to be appointed as governors of Kūfah and Baṣrah respectively, in order to keep a check and control of the rebels in those areas.

The renowned tactician of the Arabs, Sayyidunā Mughīrah ibn Shu‘bah, ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās and Ḥasan رضي الله عنه also forwarded their opinions that they should be appointed to these posts; their potential and abilities should be utilised and they should be allowed to leave Madīnah.<sup>1</sup>

‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās was also of the opinion that Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه should not be dismissed at this point in time<sup>2</sup> and advised: “Everything is in your control at the moment. Deal with these mischief-mongers and bring them to justice; everyone will gladly follow you thereafter.”

These opinions and counsel rendered by the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم did not bode well for the Saba’iyyah and was tantamount to signing their death warrant; they challenged each of these suggestions. In fact, Ḥasan رضي الله عنه also exclaimed: “O my beloved father! So-and-so and so-and-so have overpowered you in making decisions.”<sup>3</sup>

Moulānā Shāh Mu‘īn al-Dīn Nadwī writes:

Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه said to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه: “Listen to my advice! Bolt the door of your house and remain indoors or move to the property you own in Yanbū’. The people will search the entire earth but they will not find anyone more suitable for the khilāfah than you. I take an oath by Allah! If you associate and stand by these Egyptians (who made up the majority of those who murdered ‘Uthmān), then tomorrow you will also be accused of having a

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1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* vol. 7 pg. 235

2 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* vol. 3 pg. 461

3 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī*

hand in the killing of ‘Uthmān.” ‘Alī replied: “Now it is impossible for me to step aside.” Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه said: “Leave Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه in his post, and continue efforts to win him over.” ‘Alī replied: “By Allah, this can never happen.”<sup>1</sup>

This is the reason why, even up to this day, those who look upon the Egyptian rebels with admiration do not show any regard for these three sincere advisors of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.

Ultimately, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه became despondent and left Madīnah. When they reached Makkah, they related to Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها and the people of Makkah the painful conditions of Madīnah: “We have fled Madīnah due to fear of the Bedouins, and we have left behind a people who are so confused that they do not recognise the truth, neither do they abstain from falsehood, nor do they protect themselves.”<sup>2</sup>

In order to rectify the situation, the motivation of which was to assist Sayyidunā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and dispel the rebels from his ranks, the people of Makkah prepared an army under the leadership of Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه, consisting of one thousand men.<sup>3</sup>

Ya’lā ibn Umayyah, who was appointed by ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه as the governor of San‘ā’, sent four hundred thousand dirhams and seventy young Qurayshī soldiers. He also purchased a camel by the name of ‘askar’ for Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها for eighty dinārs. When news of this reached Sayyidunā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه he commented to his supporters: “Do you know who I am faced with? ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها whom the people obey more than anyone else, Zubayr who is the strongest, Ṭalḥah who is the most intelligent, and Ya’la ibn Umayyah who is the wealthiest.”<sup>4</sup>

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1 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* pg. 3085 as reported in *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah* vol. 2 pg. 240

2 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* vol. 3 pg. 469; *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah* vol. 2 pg. 92

3 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* vol. 3 pg. 472

4 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Faḥḥ al-Bāri* vol. 3 pg. 55

Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه then proceeded to meet the people of Baṣrah, who were inclined to them respectively, and it was hoped that this would strengthen their cause. After a small skirmish with the governor they took control of Baṣrah. However, before a message could be sent to 'Alī رضي الله عنه informing him that they had taken control of Baṣrah and beckon him to come there so that the problem of the rebels and how to deal with them could be discussed; the rebels of Baṣrah had already reached Madīnah and began inciting 'Alī رضي الله عنه against them. “Since Baṣrah has already been taken over, the next city to be attacked will be Madīnah. In order to put an end to this, you need to mobilise your army in that direction.” The rebels exhorted. 'Alī رضي الله عنه accepted their proposal.

The inhabitants of Madīnah begged 'Alī رضي الله عنه not to depart with an army. 'Abd Allāh ibn Salām رضي الله عنه said: “If you proceed with an army, then the ruler of the Muslims (referring to 'Alī) will not be able to return to Madīnah. Rather go alone and discuss the matter with them, hopefully a solution will be reached.” However, this was of no avail and 'Alī left for Baṣrah, while the majority of the people of Madīnah remained behind.

Nevertheless, 'Alī رضي الله عنه proceeded with an army of nine hundred towards Baṣrah, comprising of very few Ṣaḥābah. Imām Sha'bī reports that aside from Sayidunā 'Ammār رضي الله عنه, there were only six Badrī Ṣaḥābah; Abū al-Ḥaytham ibn Ṭayhān, Abū Qatādah al-Anṣārī, Ziyād ibn Ḥanẓalah, Khuzaymah ibn Thābit to name a few.<sup>1</sup> Sadly, these great personalities did not get the opportunity to meet each other before this and discuss the issue, perhaps the entire episode could have been avoided as the solution was quite simple.

In order to reinforce their army, one of the rebels – Ashtar - proceeded to Kūfah. This was the city that looked up to Zubayr رضي الله عنه, and as a result no one joined him. Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī رضي الله عنه - the governor of Kūfah - sent him back empty handed. Thereafter, 'Alī رضي الله عنه sent two such personalities to Kūfah, whom all the Muslims rightfully held in esteem: 'Ammār ibn Yāsir رضي الله عنه and the grandson of Rasūlullāh

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1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* vol. 7 pg. 234

صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Ḥasan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

‘Ammār addressed the people in the Jāmī Masjid:

O people! The matter has become very delicate and touchy. On the one side we have Umm al-Mu’minin ‘Ā’ishah Ṣiddīqah, the wife of your Nabī in this world and in the hereafter, and on the other side is ‘Alī, the cousin of your Nabī. Who are you going to obey, the wife of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ or ‘Alī?

People were confused. Who to obey, who to accept and who to reject? Nonetheless, this speech of ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was not fruitful. Ḥasan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ then stepped forward, who resembled Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in manner and appearance, with gentleness and wisdom he won over the hearts of the people. The governor was opposed to the idea of taking sides and was thus removed from the masjid. ‘Alī’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ forces were strengthened and he advanced towards Baṣrah with an army of nine thousand six hundred and fifty.

### The rebels secretly incite the fighting

If ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ were to have met with Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا in private, they would have quickly come to realise that they were not enemies to each other. Each of them only wished to uphold the commands of Allah and they all had one common enemy, namely the Saba’iyyah, who were set upon sowing disunity amongst the ummah. We have already quoted the words of ‘Alī (from *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* and *Sīrat al-khulafā’* of al-Khuḍrī) when he announced after the reconciliation for the mischief mongers to separate from his army. According to all historical sources, these mischief mongers then held a secret meeting that very night, wherein they decided to split into two groups and each spend the night in opposing camps, and begin the fighting the next day. A few extracts are given below:

1) Ashtar Nakha’ī, who was a commander in ‘Alī’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ army, said:

I swear by Allah, their discussions are revolving around one issue, their reconciliation will be upon taking our blood. Let us send Ṭalḥah to join



'Uthmān (i.e. kill him also) so that they will be pleased with us in the peace we grant them.” (It is apparent from this narration that the reports which mention Marwān ibn Ḥakam having fired the arrow on Ṭalḥah is false). Ibn Saba' commented: “Ṭalḥah and his people are five thousand strong and we are only two thousand five hundred. This is not a wise move.” (We can also gauge the exaggeration with regards to the numbers present in this battle as well as the number slain, here mention is made of two thousand five hundred with five thousand on the opposite side, then reports claim that ten thousand were slain. The numbers reported increase even more drastically to five, ten, and even twenty thousand by the time they reached Ṣiffīn, where the number slain is then reported to be seventy thousand).

In *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* (vol. 3 pg. 507) there is an addition:

Ashtar Nakhaī then said: “Ṭalḥah and Zubayr's position and what they desire is clear, but till now we have not understood clearly what is the policy and position of 'Alī, so let us attack and join 'Alī with 'Uthmān (i.e. kill him), then he will also be pleased with us in the peace we grant him. It will also create a major uproar and turmoil amongst the Muslims.”

'Abd Allāh ibn Saba' rebuked him harshly saying: “Then we will be exposed and the fact that we are the enemies of the Muslims will be open to all”. (In other words: “We need to remain secretive, since we still have a greater mission to accomplish).

2) 'Albā' ibn Ḥaytham said: “Let us leave both groups and move on our own until we appoint our own leader. 'Abd Allāh ibn Saba' remarked: “I swear by Allah! This will be exactly what they want. If this happens, they will snatch us like hawks.”

3) 'Abd Allāh ibn Saba' then spoke: “O my people (of the Saba'iyyah)! The only way to succeed in our mission is to join both sides, then tomorrow in the early part of the morning before they meet, we raise the cry of “the opposition has been treacherous” and start the battle from both sides. In this way, they will

be forced into fighting and Allah will cause ‘Alī, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr to wage war against each other.”

Agreement was finally reached and so they split up and spent the night in opposite camps. The following morning, at pre-dawn, they began the battle.<sup>1</sup>

### The martyrdom of Ṭalḥah and Zubayr, and the grief of ‘Alī

Both parties slept that night without any real concern, since the announcement of reconciliation had already been made, thus when battle began people were not able to protect themselves and many lost their lives in this sudden attack.<sup>2</sup>

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1 *ibn Khaldūn* vol. 2 pg. 107

2 This intense battle led to a large number of people being killed, but there are differing reports as to the actual numbers. Al-Mas‘ūdī said that these differences were due to the bias of the narrators. (*Murūj al-Dhahab*, 3/367) Qatādah stated that the number of people killed at the Battle of the Camel was twenty thousand.(*ibid*) It seems that this is greatly exaggerated, because the number of the two armies put together was close to this or less. The Rāfiḍī Shī‘ah Abū Mikhnaf exaggerated greatly because of his bias, and he did wrong when he thought that he was doing right. He said that the twenty thousand were from among the people of Baṣrah. (*Tarīkh Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt*, 186) Sayf stated that the number was ten thousand, half from among the companions of ‘Alī عليه السلام and half from among the companions of ‘Ā’ishah عليها السلام. According to another report, he said: “It was said that the number was fifteen thousand: five thousand from among the people of Kūfah and ten thousand from among the people of Baṣrah; half of them were killed during the first battle and half during the second.” But these two reports are weak because of the interruptions in their chains of narration and other faults; they are also grossly overstated. ‘Umar ibn Shaybah mentioned, with his chain of narration, that the number of slain was more than six thousand, but this report is also weak in its chain of narration. (*Tarīkh Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt*,186) Al-Ya‘qūbī exaggerated further and gave a higher figure; he put the number of slain at thirty-two thousand. (*Musannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, 7/546; *Faṭḥ al-Bārī*, 13/62) This figure is highly inflated, the reasons for this overstatement include the following:

- a. The desire of the enemies of the Ṣaḥābah, namely the Saba’iyyah and their followers, to deepen the dispute and division among the members of the ummah who are united by the love of the Ṣaḥābah and who are following their example, after that of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم.

'Alī reminded Zubayr رضي الله عنه of a certain hadīth (the status of which needs to be verified), due to which he left the battlefield. He was performing ṣalāh when ibn Jurmūz attacked and killed him. Regrettably, 'Alī رضي الله عنه could not protect Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه from his army. When he saw the martyred body of Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه

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continued from page 26

- b. The contribution of some poets and ignorant people from numerous tribes to inflating and magnifying the number, so as to match the poetry that they attributed to some of their leaders and knights. In addition to that, the storytellers wanted to attract people's attention with the exciting events of which they spoke.
- c. The building of confidence for the followers of the thugs and Saba'iyyah in order to prove the success of their plans and arrangements. (*al-Inṣāf*, pg. 455)

As for the true number of people slain in the Battle of the Camel, it is probably very small, for the following reasons:

- The short duration of the fight. Ibn Abī Shaybah narrated with a sound chain of narration (*Musannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, 7/546; *Faḥ al-Bārī*, 13/62) that the actual combat started only in the afternoon and that by the time the sun set, no one who had been defending the camel was still there.
- The defensive nature of the fighting, since each side was merely defending itself and doing no more than that.
- The true number of those slain at the Battle of the Camel is regarded as very low in comparison to the number of Muslim martyrs at the Battle of Yarmūk (3000) and the Battle of Qādisiyyah (8500), and those were battles that went on for a number of days. This is also taking into account the ferocity and intensity of those other battles, which were decisive battles in the history of nations.
- Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt narrated a list of those among the slain of the Battle of the Camel whose names were known; there were approximately one hundred names. (*Tārīkh Khalīfah*, p. 187, 190) If we assume that the total number was double that, this would mean that the number of people slain at the Battle of the Camel was no more than two hundred. This is what Dr. Khālid ibn Muḥammad al-Ghayth suggests is most likely, in his dissertation *Istihād 'Uthmān wa Waq'at al-Jamal fī Marwiyāt Sayf ibn 'Umar fī Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī - Dirāsah Naqdiyyah (The martyrdom of 'Uthmān and the Battle of the Camel in the reports of Sayf ibn 'Umar in Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī - A critical study)* - taken from *Sīrah Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib* by 'Alī Muḥammad al-Ṣallābī

he gasped and exclaimed: “If only I had died twenty years before this!” He then took hold of Ṭalḥah’s paralysed hand, kissed it and said: “This is the same hand which protected Rasūlullāh ﷺ during the Battle of Uḥud.” He then burst into tears over the bodies of his two close friends, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا. ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was then informed: “The killer of Ṭalḥah wishes to meet you (which establishes that it was one of the Saba’iyah and not Marwān) but ‘Alī replied: “Give him glad tidings of Jahannam!” ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ then said: “O Allah! I have nothing to do with the murderers of ‘Uthmān.”<sup>1</sup>

When ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, in accordance to the ḥadīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, gave glad tidings of Jahannam to ‘Amr ibn Jurmūz - the killer of Zubayr, his cousin - ‘Amr remarked:

نقتل أعداؤكم و تبشروننا بالنار

We kill your enemies and you give us glad tidings of Jahannam!

He later committed suicide, upon which ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: “Verily Rasūlullāh ﷺ had spoken the truth; that this person is destined for Jahannam (and also those who praise him).”

During the course of the battle ‘Alī, and ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا as well, were cursing the killers of ‘Uthmān and their supporters

اللهم العن قتلة عثمان و أشياعهم

O Allah curse the murderers of ‘Uthmān and their supporters.<sup>2</sup>

‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ also recited the following verses regarding Ṭalḥah and Zubayr:

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِّنْ غَلٍّ إِخْوَانًا عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مُّتَقَابِينَ

1 *ibn al-‘Asākir* vol. 7 pg. 89

2 *ibn al-‘Asākir* vol. 7 pg. 88, 89

And We will remove whatever is in their breasts of resentment, (so they will be) brothers, on thrones facing each other.

A number of soldiers surrounded the camel of ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها in order to protect her. They too were mercilessly attacked by Ashtar Nakhaī and his people. When ‘Alī saw this, he was alarmed and commanded Ashtar to draw back. This was to no avail. ‘Alī therefore instructed that the legs of the camel be cut, causing the camel to drop, and ‘Ā’isha رضي الله عنها would be saved from being martyred. The people of Baṣrah were thereby defeated, and ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها was saved. ‘Alī رضي الله عنه then honourably sent her to Madīnah saying: “O people this is the wife of your Nabī in this world and in the hereafter, and she will be accorded the same respect which was accorded to her before this, except for the fact that she has erred and confronted us.” Then ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها also praised ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and said “My difference with him was the same as that of any mother with her son.”

Outside the tent were two of the Saba’iyyah, who began criticising Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها despite referring to her as “Mother”. ‘Alī ordered Qa‘qā’ ibn ‘Amr to punish each with a hundred lashes.

### The causes which led to the Battle of Ṣiffīn

On account of Sayyidunā Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه, the cousin of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه with whom ‘Uthmān’s son had also taken refuge, stipulating that he would only pledge his allegiance to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه if the rebels were brought to justice; preparations were already underway to march on Syria before the Battle of Jamal occurred. The Battle of Jamal only strengthened the resolve of the rebels. Ashtar Nakhaī was unable to sway the people of Kūfah and it was only after Ḥasan رضي الله عنه delivered his speech - and due to his family ties with Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم - did they manage to get nine thousand five hundred people to join them. Yet we find that historical narrations claim that within a month or two later, they were able to muster an army of about ninety thousand? Ja‘far Ḥusayn (a Shī‘ī scholar and translator of *Nahj al-Balāghah* into Urdu) writes:

So the people of Kūfah and its surroundings began arriving in droves and the number of the army began swelling, till it surpassed eighty thousand.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, this army camped on the eastern side of Aleppo, close to the Euphrates River. Their mission: to render a lesson of obedience to all those who do not pledge their allegiance, to those who do not step down after being dismissed, to those who still demanded qīṣāṣ.

It is reported in *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* that the following people proceeded to meet Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه: ‘Adī ibn Ḥātim, Yazīd ibn Qays Arḥabī, Shabīth ibn Rabī, Ziyād ibn Ḥafṣah. They mentioned to Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه the virtues of ‘Alī and implored him to unite the Jamā‘ah by pledging allegiance, but at the same time issued him with a threat:

يا معاوية لا يصيبك الله وأصحابك بيوم مثل يوم الجمل

O Mu‘āwiyah! It should not happen that Allah sends upon you and your followers a day similar to the Day of Jamal.

Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه replied:

كأنك إنما جئت متهددا لم تأت مصلحا ....

It seems as if you have come here only to threaten me and not with the intention of reconciliation.

Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه then said: “You are the same people who attacked ‘Uthmān.”

If only the envoy that met with Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه had not comprised of the very rebels who had incited all this turmoil but rather one of the senior Ṣaḥābah, such as Ibn ‘Abbās or Abū Ayyūb al-Ansarī, then perhaps they would have convinced Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه to unite with ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. On the contrary, the threats issued by the envoy was met with increased conviction:

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1 *Nahj al-Balāghah* pg 356

You are inviting me to obey and join the Jamā‘ah? We also have a Jamā‘ah on our side. As for obedience to your leader (‘Alī), we cannot submit to him, since he had killed our Khalīfah ‘Uthmān (this was based on a misunderstanding, *Nahj al-Balāghah* reports ‘Alī رضي الله عنه saying: “I had no hand in the murder of ‘Uthmān), he has split the Jamā‘ah, he has given refuge to the murderers of ‘Uthmān and those who wish to attack us. If he claims he is not the murderer of ‘Uthmān then we will also regard it to be such. But tell me, are the murderers of ‘Uthmān amongst you? You know who they are, since they are your companions and they form part of your army. Hand them over to me so that we may execute them in lieu of their crime, then we will obey him and join the Jamā‘ah.

In reply to this, Shabīth said to Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه: “O Mu‘āwiyah! Are you then prepared to execute ‘Ammār as well in retaliation for ‘Uthmān?”<sup>1</sup>

### The rebels portrayed ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه to be one of the murderers of ‘Uthmān

It is glaringly apparent the manner in which these rebels - who were the true enemies of the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم and Islam - were attempting to shift blame off themselves by claiming that ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه was one of the killers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, whereas he played no part in the murder of ‘Uthmān. Those responsible for his murder were the Saba’iyah and no one else.

If the demands of Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه were to have been met and qīṣāṣ taken, then these rebels would have been brought to justice and executed, and this was something the army of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was not prepared to accede to. On the other hand, Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه was not able to change his stance and submit, since just a few months previously he had been threatened by these same rebels: “If you do not give us free reign to carry out our mission (to muster support against

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1 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* vol. 4 pg. 2, 3

the Khalīfah) in Syria, then our authority is coming soon, and we will deal with you.”<sup>1</sup>

In summary, those who apply the verse of *baghāwah* (rebellion) to Mu‘āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, should first apply it to these rebels, since they were the first to do so, and it was they who prevented the command of Allah (qīṣāṣ) to be implemented.

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ فَإِنْ بَغَتَ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي  
تَبَغَتْ حَتَّى تَنْفِيَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ  
الْمُقْسِطِينَ

And if two factions among the believers should fight, then reconcile between the two. But if one of them rebels against the other, then fight against those who rebel until they return to the ordinance of Allah . And if they return, then reconcile between them with fairness and act justly. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.

This verse in no way applies to Mu‘āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, since he did not embark on and march towards any group to attack them. He remained in his area, protecting himself. Furthermore, those people who are the true implications of the verse above – the murderers of ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ – they now threaten to attack the people of Syria. Mu‘āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ did not forget the threats they had made previously and now they to threaten to kill him in his own land. Also now playing on his mind was what had happened to Ṭalḥah, Zubayr and the other innocents who lost their lives at Jamal. Mu‘āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ felt he should not make the mistake of bowing before these rebels. This was Mu‘āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ’s ‘crime’, due to which those historians who supported the true rebels declared him to be the “rebel”. Thereafter, other historians and authors borrowed this incorrect attribution (of him being a *bāghī* - rebel) and included it in their books.

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1 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* – events of the year 35 A.H.



A critical question: If the ruler of Syria had submitted, would it have brought about peace?

Ponder for a moment, if Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه had acceded to his dismissal as the ruler of Syria, and pledged his allegiance to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه would this have satisfied the rebels? Would they then hand over the killers of ‘Uthmān to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه? Would the murderers then be executed, resulting in the unification of the ummah?

Or would the rebels then cause dissension and disunity amongst the ranks of ‘Alī’s army, as they did on the occasion of *tahkīm* (arbitration)? Is this not a known fact that whether there was submission or not, the objective of these rebels was to cause disunity amongst the Muslims, resulting in endless civil war? According to historical narrations, whichever delegation went from Iraq to Syria did not speak in an amicable fashion, rather they spoke harshly, brandishing their swords. Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه also too brandished his sword to meet their threats, and they were allowed to return safely, with their dignity, to Iraq. Whenever exhorted by the senior Ṣaḥābah, his answer was one: “I am prepared to pledge allegiance. You convince them to bring the killers to justice.” When Ṣaḥābah such as Abū al-Dardā’, Abū Umāmah al-Bāḥilī and Jarīr ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Bajalī رضي الله عنه returned with this message of Mu‘āwiyah, ten to twenty thousand from the army of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه stood and shouted: “We are all the killers of ‘Uthmān. Mu‘āwiyah should bring us all to justice.” It was due to this attitude that these Ṣaḥābah did not join any side.<sup>1</sup>

It is reported in *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī, ibn al-‘Athīr, ibn al-Khaldūn* and *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah* that Ashtar al-Nakhaī repeatedly rebuked Jarīr ibn ‘Abd Allāh and disrespected him to such an extent that Jarīr رضي الله عنه - who was one of the governors of ‘Alī - eventually left the army.

Due to these conflicting viewpoints and the plotting of the rebels, no reconciliation could be reached, and battle was unavoidable. Five months the Muslims honoured each other’s blood and life, with only a few minor skirmishes taking place or

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1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* vol. 7 pg. 254

someone deciding to show-off his bravery, other than that they performed ṣalāt al-Janāzah together, partook of meals together, performed ṣalāh behind one Imām. It was only in Muḥarram 37 A.H. that preparations for battle began and the battle itself in Ṣafar 37 A.H. 'Alī عليه السلام gathered his army on this night - known as layl al-harīr and exhorted his army to prepare for battle. The battle began but here the Syrians were not unprepared like those at Jamal. They too were prepared for an attack, and they retaliated in kind. It is sad to note that many Muslims lost their lives in this battle.<sup>1</sup>

### 1 The number of participants in Ṣiffīn and the number of those slain

Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī عليه السلام prepared to go on the campaign to Syria, and he sent word to mobilise the people. (*al-Iṣābah*, 1/123, 124) He prepared a 'huge army'; the reports differ concerning the size, but they are all weak reports (*Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, 7/260; *al-M'arifah wa al-Tārīkh*, 3/13, *Tārīkh Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt*, p. 193) apart from one with a reliable chain of narration, which states that he set out with fifty thousand men. (*Tārīkh Khalīfah*, pg. 193) Also shedding light on the size of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī's عليه السلام army is the following exhortation from 'Amr ibn al-'Ās عليه السلام when preparing the Syrians for battle. He stood up to address and encourage the army, saying: "The people of Iraq are divided and weak. The people of Basra are opposed to 'Alī because he killed some of them, and the strongest of the people of Kūfah were killed in the Battle of the Camel. 'Alī is marching with a small group, among whom are those who killed your Khalīfah, so do not fail in your duty to bring them to justice." (*Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, 5/601)

A few points should be noted:

1. The Iraqi people were divided in their allegiance to 'Alī عليه السلام and all of them did not join the army of 'Alī عليه السلام.
2. The army of 'Alī عليه السلام was referred to as a small group, whereas an army of fifty thousand would be considered to be a large force, especially when considering the numbers with which the Muslims had faced the mighty Roman and Persian armies.
3. 'Amr ibn al-'Ās did not refer to 'Alī عليه السلام as the killer of 'Uthmān but clearly stated that the killers were present in his army.

As for the number of the Syrian army, Mu'awiyah عليه السلام also set out with an army, and here too reports differ on the number, but they all have interrupted chains of narration; they are the same reports that estimated the size of 'Alī's army. The number was put at one hundred and twenty thousand, (*Khilāfat 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, p. 194; *al-Ma'rifah wa al-Tārīkh*, 3/313) or seventy thousand, or much more than that. (*Khilāfat 'Alī*, p. 194; *Tārīkh Khalīfah*; p. 193) The closest to the truth is a report that they numbered sixty thousand. Although

Allāmah ibn al-Kathīr writes that Imam Aḥmad ibn Hambal رَحِمَهُ اللهُ narrates from Muḥammad ibn Sirīn رَحِمَهُ اللهُ that when this trial began during the reign of 'Alī, there were tens of thousands of Ṣaḥābah alive, but not even one hundred participated in those Battles. In fact these numbers do not even reach thirty.<sup>2</sup>

According to ibn Baṭṭah, who narrated from Bukayr ibn al-Ashajj, those Ṣaḥābah who had participated in the Battle of Badr remained in their homes after the martyrdom of 'Uthmān رَحِمَهُ اللهُ and all them (except for a handful) only left their homes when proceeding to their graves (i.e. they stayed aloof from participating until death).<sup>3</sup>

### The impressions of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ

The Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ understood the great loss and harm which the Muslims suffered in this battle to be destructive to the dīn of Islam. According to a report

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*continued from page 34*

the chain of narration of this report as well is interrupted, its narrator is Ṣafwān ibn 'Amr al-Saksī, a Homsī from Syria who was born in 72 A.H and is proven to be trustworthy. He met a number of those who had been present at Ṣiffīn, as is clear from studying his biography. (*Siyar 'Alām al-Nubalā*, 6/380) The chain of narration to him is sound (*Khilāfat 'Alī ibn Abi Tālib*, p. 194).

On account of the uncertainty or obscurity of the number of participants in this Battle, the reports regarding the number slain are even more incongruous and obscure. Thus, the scholars have conflicting views concerning the number of people slain at Ṣiffīn. Ibn Abī Khaythamah said that it was seventy thousand: twenty-five thousand of the people of Iraq and forty-five thousand of the people of Syria. Ibn al-Qayyim said that it was seventy thousand or more. (*al-Sawā'iq al-Mursalah*, 1/377) Undoubtedly these numbers are not accurate; they are wildly inflated. The real fighting and all-out battle lasted for three days, during which the fighting was stopped at night except for the Friday evening, so the total period of fighting was approximately thirty hours. (*al-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah*, p. 360-362) No matter how violent the fighting was, it could not have been more intense than Qādisiyyah, where the number of martyrs was 8500. (*Tarikh al-Ṭabarī*, 4/388) Logically, it is difficult to accept the reports that mention these huge figures and there are no distinct reliable reports in this regard. Adapted from *Sīrah Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib* by 'Alī Muḥammad al-Ṣallābī

2 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* vol. 7 pg. 252

3 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* vol. 7 pg. 254

in *Bukhāri* and *Muslim*, Sahl ibn Ḥunayf رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, one of ‘Alī’s governors, remarked upon returning: “O people! Look at your opinions with eyes of suspicion (i.e. do not regard this slaying of Muslims as an act of reward). I had seen Abū Jandal (in chains) on the occasion of Ḥudaybiyyah. If there was a time when I was close to disobeying the command of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ it was only then (but I did not). I swear by Allah! Since we embraced Islam, we always felt no difficulty lifting our swords, except in this battle. We tried to seal a hole on one end but another opened on the other. We did not know how to remedy the situation.”<sup>1</sup>

Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ praised the stance of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, which he would take in the Battle of Nahrawān, saying:

يقاتلهم أو لا هم بالحق

The one who is closer to the truth will fight the Khawārij.<sup>2</sup>

(The Khawārij refers to those who disbanded from ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and then attacked him. They comprised of the same rebels and murderers of ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ from Egypt and Iraq) It should be borne in mind that there is no narration from Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ praising any side of those who participated in the Battles of Jamal and Şiffīn. In fact, all the muḥaddithīn report these incidents under the chapters of *fitan* (trials and tribulations).

Undoubtedly, those who totally refrained from joining the battles were praised in abundance, such as Muḥammad ibn Maslamah. It is narrated: “Two large groups of the Muslims will fight each other. Their claim will be the same (implementing the law of Allah). The one standing will be better than the one walking, and the one sitting will be better than the one who is standing. (i.e. to abstain from killing a Muslim is the greatest virtue.)”

Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ also praised his grandson, Ḥasan رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, saying: “He

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1 *Bukhāri* vol. 2 pg. 602

2 *Bukhāri*

is a sayyid (leader) whom Allah will use to bring together two large groups of the Muslims.” It is for this reason that Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh ﷺ once seated Ḥasan رضي الله عنه together with Usāmah ibn Zayd رضي الله عنه on his lap and said: “O Allah! I love them. You also love them and love those who love (follow) them.”<sup>1</sup>

Usāmah رضي الله عنه said: “If you wish, you can throw me to the lions, but I will never lift my sword against a Muslim.”

### Problems facing ‘Alī رضي الله عنه

The major problem which ‘Alī رضي الله عنه faced was the rebels who had concealed themselves in his army. These were the real hypocrites and his true enemies. They left no stone unturned in spreading anarchy and keeping the Khalīfah occupied with internal strife instead of allowing him to turn his attention to borders and furthering the successes of his predecessors. This was the ultimate objective of the hypocrites; to halt the forward march of the Muslims and forced them to consume themselves through civil war. However, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه soon saw through the charade, albeit after these two Battles had been fought, and realised who his true enemies were. They were the very ones who were all along posing as his aids and assistants. It was the same rebels who murdered ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه. It was then that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه began cursing them repeatedly: “May you never be guided.”, “May you never be shown the straight path.”, “If only I had never met you and distanced myself from you”, “As long as the northerly and southerly winds blow, I will never call for you again.”<sup>2</sup>

*Nahj al-Balāghah*, the general history books and the books of the Shī‘āh as well, lament over the fact that every step taken by ‘Alī رضي الله عنه had an adverse effect and resulted in more harm coming about, such that all the lands under his control began to slip away, one by one. The true cause of this is now apparent to you, it was the work of the ‘dark moles’ from within.

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1 Bukhāri and Muslim

2 *Nahj al-Balāghah* sermon: 117

In order to remove a great administrator and tactician such as Qays ibn Sa’d ibn ‘Ubādah from his post, the rebels used their tried and tested plan; carrying tales to Egypt, Hijāz and on to Yemen. ‘Alī’s great assistant, his cousin ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه, was dismissed from his post as the governor of Baṣrah. ‘Alī’s elder brother, ‘Aqīl ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه was accused of making unlawful requests from the public treasury, and this subsequently sent him to Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه. The purpose behind these conspiracies was to remove the trustworthy from the inner circle of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. Since it was on the insistence of these sincere followers that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه accepted the arbitration. It was then that the Khawārij separated from his army, and his own ‘followers’ chose to fight him instead.

Nevertheless, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه fought against these Khawārij in the Battle of Nahrawān and defeated them. This is the battle which was praised by Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم (as had been quoted earlier). Ja‘far Ḥusayn (a Shī‘ī scholar), commenting on ‘Alī not gaining victory in Ṣiffīn, and attacked the faith and actions of the army of ‘Alī in the following words:

1. Due to the battle continuing for such a long time, some of them got tired and stopped fighting. They found this to be a solution to stopping the battle.
2. Some joined ‘Alī because they were under his authority, although their hearts were not really with him. They did wish him victorious.
3. Some hoped and anticipated for Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه to be victorious.
4. Some had been conspiring with Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه before the battle even began.<sup>1</sup>

(No. 3 and 4 are blatant lies. If this was the case, they would have met with Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه before.)

These are the Saba’iyyah rebels who murdered ‘Uthmān, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه. Now they wished to kill ‘Alī رضي الله عنه as well. Why is it so farfetched to be

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1 *Nahj al-Balāghah* - urdu translation pg. 584

accept that they are the same ones who killed ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه?

When this Shī‘ī scholar, for his own benefit, is willing to tarnish the reputation of his own people in this manner, and regards it to be the height of scholastic scrutiny; then why is it regarded as indecorous to prove the enemies of these Ṣaḥābah to be evil and the most depraved of society?

### The Saba’iyyah killed ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه

Let us look at what these rebels have done so far:

- » In their secret meeting before the Battle of Jamal, Ashtar al-Nakhaī forwards his opinion that ‘Alī and Ṭalḥah should be killed.
- » Once the agreement for reconciliation was reached, it was they who instigated and caused the fighting to break out.
- » Prior to Ṣiffīn, they prevented discussions and dialogue to take place, which could of led to reconciliation.
- » Whenever the Syrians demanded the killers of ‘Uthmān be brought to justice, they would shout: “We are all the killers of ‘Uthmān. Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه should bring us all to justice.”
- » They threatened to kill ‘Alī رضي الله عنه as well.
- » They then separated from ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and became the Khawārij, and fought against ‘Alī.
- » Eventually the wretched ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muljim murdered ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.
- » According to reports from *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī*, when ‘Alī رضي الله عنه intended to search for the murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, demanding they be handed over; they immediately threatened to kill him.

There are numerous incidents which point to the fact that the killers of ‘Uthmān were the rebels, and the killers of ‘Alī also the same. Thus, according to the words of the ḥadīth, if they are proven to also be the killers of ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه, then

there is no sort of proof, not *aqlī* (rational), nor *naqlī* (traditional) or even *nafsī* (psychological), which could prove them otherwise.

Seriously ponder over this for a while, we have a strong indicator to the fact that they killed ‘Ammār. When according to the Shī‘ī scholar, Ja‘far Ḥusayn, the Battle of Şifīn was dragging on such that some tired and stopped fighting, and were searching for a strategy to end the battle and still be able to claim victory. Thus, they conceived to kill ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه and then mourn his death. The blame would then fall squarely on the shoulders of Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه, thus the label of rebel would shift to him, since the ḥadīth, which was known to all and sundry, mentions that ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه will be killed by a group of rebels.

### The research of Moulānā Şafdar

Our respected Ustādh, Shaykh al-Ḥadeeth Moulānā Sarfarāz khan, mentioned a few pertinent points regarding this ḥadīth of *Bukhāri*:

1. It was the movement of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba - the Jew - and his followers - the Saba’iyyah - which had gained momentum and caused great harm to Islam.
2. This movement attempted to rear its ugly head during the era of ‘Umar رضي الله عنه, but was unsuccessful (but they did manage to martyr ‘Umar رضي الله عنه, and the door blocking the fitan [trials and tribulations] was flung open).
3. It has been clearly stated in the commentary of *Muslim* by Imām al-Nawawī (vol. 2 pg. 72) and in *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* (vol. 7 pg. 239) that none of the Şaḥābah participated in the killing of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه.
4. In those days, there was no procedure for screening and enrolling in the army, neither was there any formal military training. Also there was no special register or record of the soldiers, etc. Whoever desired, joined whichever army or faction he so wished. This was how these hypocrites managed to join the army of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and carried out their horrific agenda of massacring Muslims.
5. Although Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه was a very cautious far-sighted general, it is



highly possible that when the Battle of Şiffin dragged on for so long – with about 70 skirmishes taking place – these hypocrites found an opportunity and slipped into the army of Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه. Thereafter, these same mischief mongers, who were the “al-fi’at al-bāghiyah” (the group of rebels mentioned in the ḥadīth) and “inviting towards Jahannam”, got the opportunity to kill ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه.

6. There was no Sahābi or any person who was known to be “a caller to Jannah” involved in the killing of ‘Ammār, neither was he killed upon the instruction of Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه, nor was Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه pleased with it, since according to the narration of ‘Uthmān and Umm Salamah, Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم classified the killer of ‘Ammār as a dweller of Jahannam.<sup>1</sup>
7. According to a famous narration of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ās, the killer of ‘Ammār and the one who takes possession of his belongings is destined for Jahannam.<sup>2</sup> So the narrator of this ḥadīth is none other than ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ās himself, so how can it be that he, Mu‘āwiyah and the other Şaḥābah are the killers of ‘Ammār and thus dwellers of Jahannam?<sup>3</sup>

This is the actual answer and explanation of this ḥadīth.

However, if those who believe and regard historical narration to be as authentic as the Qur’ān, insist that it was the army of Mu‘āwiyah who killed ‘Ammār, than let them regard this as *Sabab al-Qatal* (indirect killing or becoming the means of the killing), just as a person who gives false testimony or when a judge is bribed and this results in the accused being killed. Although the Şaḥābah who were part of Mu‘āwiyah’s army never intended to kill ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه, it was the plot of the ignorant Saba’iyyah, who accused ‘Ammār of being one of the instigators against ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, and thus were responsible for his killing. The actual people responsible for the killing are the ones who brought him there (like the false witness or the judge who accepted the bribe).

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1 *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* vol. 11 pg. 725

2 *Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 378

3 Adapted from the booklet: *Some important discussions regarding certain chapters of Bukhārī* pg. 7, 8

Nevertheless, (the reason why it is impossible for the Ṣaḥābah to have killed ‘Ammār is) because the quality which was negated from the Ṣaḥābah and they were declared free of is the same quality which was established for and attributed to the rebels. If we were to assume that ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه was killed by a pile of stones falling on him, then too we would not attribute his dying to the stones, rather to the one who brought and piled up the stones. So since the rebels brought ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه to the battlefield and it was they who accused him of being the killer of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه; they will be classified as his killers. This was mentioned by Mu’āwiyah رضي الله عنه also when he said: “The killers of ‘Ammār are the ones who brought him here, not us.”<sup>1</sup> Sayyidunā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه might have responded spontaneously saying: “In that case the killers of Ḥamzah were the Muslims and not the disbelievers.” However, the difference between Uḥud and Ṣiffīn is that in Uḥud seven hundred true sincere Muslims stood against the kuffār, after the leader of the munafiqīn, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ubay ibn Salūl, returned with three hundred of his followers, leaving only the faithful and sincere alongside Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. On the other hand, in the Battle of Ṣiffīn there is consensus that the hypocrites and rebels had sought refuge in the army of ‘Alī, and thus the act of killing ‘Ammār will be attributed to them, directly or indirectly.

The one who falsely accused ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه of being one of the killers of ‘Uthmān was Shabath ibn Rab’ī.<sup>2</sup> This is what Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar رحمته الله has said regarding this murderer of ‘Uthmān and ‘Ammār, who kept changing his alliance and loyalty:

Shabath ibn Rab’ī al-Tamīmī al-Kūfī was a *mukhadram* (he was born in the pre-Islamic era but only embraced Islam after the demise of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم). He was the mu’adhin of *Sajjāh* (the lady imposter who claimed nubuwwah after the demise of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم). He then accepted Islam and went on to assist in the murder of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه. Thereafter he joined the ranks of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه (on the occasion of Ṣiffīn he came as an envoy to Mu’āwiyah رضي الله عنه and claimed that ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه was one of the killers of

1 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* vol. 4 pg. 29

2 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* vol. 4 pg. 13

‘Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) and then joined the Khawārij. He then repented, and would be among those who invited Ḥusayn (رضي الله عنه) (to Kūfah) but joined the army that fought and killed him. Subsequently, he joined Mukhtār al-Thaqafī and fought to avenge the death of Ḥusayn (رضي الله عنه). He was appointed as a police officer in Kūfah and later assisted in the killing of Mukhtār al-Thaqafī. He eventually died in Kūfah in 80 A.H.<sup>1</sup>

It is very sad to note that ‘Alī (رضي الله عنه) and the Ahl al-Bayt would always have such supporters who seemed outspoken and brave but were truly hypocrites and mischief mongers. They might have apparently appeared to be supporters of the Ahl al-Bayt but it was under this guise that they carried out their heinous crimes of massacring Muslims.

The explanation of the ḥadīth: “You will invite them to Jannah and they will invite you to Jahannam.”

Sayyidunā ‘Ammār (رضي الله عنه) was never the killer of Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) and neither did he assist the rebels in any way. In the year 35 A.H. - the year in which ‘Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) was martyred - he sent his special and most trustworthy companions to various parts of the Islamic world, to investigate the allegations made against his governors and the activities of the Saba’iyyah movement. ‘Ammār (رضي الله عنه) was sent to Egypt, which was the headquarters of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’. All others returned with a detailed report of what was transpiring, except for ‘Ammār (رضي الله عنه) who was held back by the Saba’iyyah. ‘Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) wrote to the governor of Egypt, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sa’d ibn Abī Sarḥ, enquiring the reason for ‘Ammār (رضي الله عنه) not returning with his report. The governor wrote back informing him that the Egyptians have put pressure on him and have surrounded him. Amongst them were ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’, Khālīd ibn Muljim (the brother of the one who killed ‘Alī), Sowdān ibn Ḥamdān, Kinānah ibn Bishr (all historical narrations are unanimous on the fact that they were the murderers of ‘Uthmān (رضي الله عنه)). Kinānah was extremely brave and was a general of ‘Alī’s (رضي الله عنه) army. He had killed many

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1 *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 1 pg. 411

Syrians in the battle for Egypt. Finally, Mu‘awiyah ibn Khadīj gained the upper hand in the battle and killed him. Mu‘awiyah ibn Khadīj was also responsible for the execution of Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sa’d ibn Abī Sarḥ, the governor of Egypt, continued: “They are trying to influence ‘Ammār to accept their views. They believe that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ will return to the world. They are also trying to influence ‘Ammār to disassociate himself from ‘Uthmān. They also claim that the people of Madīnah have the same beliefs as them.”<sup>1</sup>

The governor of Egypt enquired from ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ whether he should execute these Saba’iyyah heretics but ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ replied that he should not kill them, Allah Ta‘ālā will deal with them.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it was these kuffār masquerading as Muslims who took undue advantage of the gentle nature, nobility and modesty of ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا, and created dissension in the ummah. It was they who drove a wedge into this ummah which led to such senseless loss of life.

We come to know from the above narration that it was these very Saba’iyyah who took advantage of ‘Ammār’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ old age and held him back. They even invited him to rebel against and kill ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ; in other words: “They were inviting him to Jahannam.” Despite the temptation of their speech, the likes of which is described in the Qur’ān:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ

There are some whose speech captivates you in this worldly life, and he even makes Allah a witness to (the truth of) what is in his heart, whereas he is the greatest mischief-monger.

Sayyidunā ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ did not accept their beliefs, which contradicts the fundamental tenets of īmān, neither did he join them in their sinister activities. In fact, ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ admonished them for what they were doing and after the

1 *Tārīkh Dimashq* of Ibn al-‘Asākir vol. 7 pg. 433

2 *ibid*

‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه was martyred, he rebuked them and in so doing “‘Ammār invited them to Jannah.”

Sayyidunā ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه would say to those who rebelled against ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه: “We had pledged allegiance to ‘Uthmān and we were pleased with him. Why did you people then kill him?”<sup>1</sup>

## Conclusion

We terminate this booklet with mention of the ‘*aqā’id*’ (beliefs) of a Muslim and the virtues of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. The Ahl al-Sunnah wa l-Jamā’ah believe that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was the fourth rightful khalīfah and the Amīr al-Mu’minīn. The majority of the Ṣaḥābah and Tabī’in of Madīnah Munawwarah pledged allegiance to him, just as they had pledged allegiance to Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه. This was also the proof that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه presented to Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه as proof for the legitimacy of his khilāfah.<sup>2</sup>

There are innumerable ahadīth mentioning the virtues of ‘Alī, hereunder we make mention of but a few:

1. Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم instructed ‘Alī رضي الله عنه to remain in Madīnah during the expedition of Tabūk, on which ‘Alī رضي الله عنه asked: “Will you leave me behind with the women and children?” Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم consoled him saying: “Are you not pleased that you are to me as Harūn عليه السلام was to Mūsā عليه السلام, except that there is no nabī after me.”<sup>3</sup>
2. Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم mentioned with regards to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه in Khaybar: “I will give the flag tomorrow to one at whose hand Allah will grant victory. He loves Allah and His Rasūl and Allah and His Rasūl love him.”<sup>4</sup>

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1 *Tārīkh al-Islām* - Nadwī vol. 2 pg. 233

2 *Nahj al-Balāghah*

3 *Bukhārī*

4 *ibid*

3. Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh ﷺ included ‘Alī رضي الله عنه among his Ahl al-Bayt and had the honour of being his son-in-law.<sup>1</sup>
4. Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: “Whoever is my close friend then ‘Alī is also his close friend.”<sup>2</sup>
5. Sayyidunā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه came in tears to Rasūlullāh ﷺ after migrating to Madīnah and said: “O Rasūlullāh ﷺ! You have created bonds of brotherhood between your Ṣaḥābah (amongst the Muhājirīn and Anṣār) but have not appointed a brother for me.” Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied: “I am your brother in this world and the next.”

In light of the many narrations regarding the virtues and merits of Sayyidunā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, it is impossible for any Muslim to harbour hatred or malice for ‘Alī رضي الله عنه or to reject his khilāfah. During his lifetime, not a single person claimed to have a greater right to the khilāfah, neither did anybody reject his worthiness of it. Even a staunch extremist Shī‘ah like Bāqir al-Majlisī has written: “Even Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه acknowledged the virtues of ‘Alī. All he desired was for ‘Alī to retain him as the governor of Syria, and he would pledge allegiance to him.”<sup>3</sup>

If you were to ask: “What is this painful heart rendering historical account you have presented before us?” My response is: “This is actually an explanation of the statement of ‘Alī, “They (the rebels) control us but we do not control them.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, they are enforcing their policies through us, but we cannot get them to do what we want. This explanation could never be given by the Saba’iyyah commentators of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. While we Muslims, out of respect for the Ṣaḥābah, remained silent regarding their disputes, these hypocrites, under the guise of *taqiyyah* (dissimulation) were painting a dark image of the Ṣaḥābah and Tabi‘īn being the rebels.

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1 Muslim

2 Tirmidhī

3 Ḥaqq al-Yaqīn

4 *Nahj al-Balāghah, Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī* vol. 3 pg. 458

They were the very same people who conspired with the Tatars in the seventh century to destroy Baghdad. They attacked Egypt and misled the Muslims with deviant rituals and practices of polytheism and innovation, to such an extent that its stench even crept into some books of belief and fiqh. There are abundant proofs for the nobility and piety of the Ṣaḥābah, which also prove that not one amongst them was *fāsiq* (a flagrant transgressor). The following verse applies to each one of them:

رضي الله عنهم ورضوا عنه واعد لهم جنات...

Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens of Jannah...

We will not deride or degrade any of them; rather we will mention only their virtue and nobility. Imām al-Bukhārī رحمته الله said:

Whoever finds fault and criticises Mu'āwiyah and 'Amr ibn al-'Ās (as well as Ṭalḥah, Zubayr, 'Ā'ishah and Mughīrah ibn Shu'bah رحمته الله, who are superior than them in rank), his heart is sick and he is classified as a Rāfiḍī.<sup>1</sup>

It was the Saba'iyyah who forced the hand 'Alī رحمته الله at every juncture, and separated from him when he attempted to reconcile and end the fighting by accepting the arbitration. It was there insistence that prompted him to leave Madīnah and confront Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رحمته الله, it was they who urged him to march on the Syrians, thus leaving the ummah in disarray within a short period of eight months, wherein it was only Muslim lives that were lost. This was the 'fruit' which these Saba'i conspirators were able to yield. O My fellow Muslims! Regard 'Alī رحمته الله to be absolved from all of this and his hands unstained by the blood that was spilt.

'Alī رحمته الله regarded those who were demanding the qīṣāṣ of 'Uthmān رحمته الله to be

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1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* vol. 8 pg. 139

excused and would say: “O people! Do not speak evil of them. We thought they were wrong and they thought we were wrong.”<sup>1</sup>

In the end, we all desire that our mistakes should be forgiven...

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

And for those who came after them, saying: “O our Rabb, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts (any) resentment toward those who have believed. O our Rabb, indeed You are Kind and Merciful.”

وصلى الله على حبيبه محمد وآله واصحابه والخلفاء الراشدين اجمعين

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1 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabrī*



